

APPLAUDING CONGRESS FOR ITS PASSAGE OF THE AMERICAN RE- COVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT

(Ms. MARKEY of Colorado asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. MARKEY of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to applaud the critical actions taken by this Congress to create jobs, to cut taxes, and to invest in America's long-term economic growth by passing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

With the goal of creating and saving jobs, rushing relief to America's businesses and families and pulling our country back from the brink of catastrophe, the Recovery Act was signed into law by President Obama in my home State of Colorado.

As a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I was especially pleased to see that the Colorado Department of Transportation was prepared with shovel-ready projects that would have an immediate and positive impact on the lives of Colorado's businesses and families.

Since the passage of the Recovery Act, 576 jobs have been created or sustained through transportation projects alone in Colorado. These jobs have created a payroll of over \$700,000. Not only have these projects helped reduce unemployment, but they're improving the safety and efficiency of Colorado's highways. With interchange improvements and with the addition of shoulder and bike lanes, the Recovery Act is making Colorado a more multimodal and sustainable place to live.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO MARINE GUN- NERY SERGEANT AARON KENEFICK

(Mr. LEE of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LEE of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to pay tribute to Marine Gunnery Sergeant Aaron Kenefick, a Williamsville, New York, native who made the ultimate sacrifice earlier this month in Kunar province, Afghanistan.

Sergeant Kenefick followed in his grandfather's footsteps when he signed up for the Marines. Nothing made his grandfather prouder. He was twice named Marine of the Year, and was the Distinguished Honor Graduate at Fort Benning, assigned to Central Command. Just 2 days before he lost his life, Sergeant Kenefick earned a Purple Heart after being hit by shrapnel in a rocket attack.

I want to recognize the courage of Sergeant Kenefick's family: his father, Donnie; his mother, Susan; and his sisters, Jade and Jacquelyn, to whom he was extremely close. They will surely fill the coming days with stories about Aaron, including the Thanksgiving a few years ago when he was pushing to have dinner as quickly as possible because he wanted to get to the VA hospital.

He said, That's where the true heroes are.

Now Aaron stands firmly among our Nation's truest heroes. The example he has set and the sacrifices he has made will always be with us.

CONGRESS, LISTEN TO THE VOICES OF PASSIONATE AMERI- CANS

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, across the country, tens of thousands of passionate, boisterous Americans have come to townhall meetings to make their voices heard to Members of Congress.

I welcome that expression of concern. Those concerns have touched a wide range of issues, but there is a common theme running through all of them, and that is that people feel they are not being listened to. While I understand the frustration, I think, maybe, the source of their frustration is not understood. It is that, no matter how loud we scream, there is still a torrent of money that is pouring into the political system on the other side that drowns out those voices.

So, as we debate health care and energy and the reform of our financial system, I hope those same passionate Americans will talk to Congress about the need to reform our campaign finance system, about the need to create public financing so that their voices, as passionate and as intelligent as they may be, are not drowned out by the huge amounts of money that we now see in the political system.

I think this is the cause for the future as the Supreme Court debates a decision which could make this even more compelling need more salient. We need to deal with this important topic.

□ 1215

THE AMERICAN RESISTANCE MOVEMENT—PAGE 2

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the American resistance movement has begun. It was seen in D.C. this weekend when over a million people came to show their displeasure with government. Their grievances: too much government spending, borrowing and taxing, too much bloated government, too much waste and irresponsibility in government.

This is not the 1960s violent antiwar protests led by radical draft-dodging college elites. These are families, working people, business owners, veterans, seniors and the backbone of the American spirit. These people have a stake in America and a concern about the future of a Nation they treasure and love.

Government beware, these people have engaged in that political fight and

are not about to give their country away to those who want to run roughshod over their lives and force more government intrusion upon them. These people don't like the atmosphere that disagreement with government is frowned upon.

This American resistance is not going away. People will not be dismissed and intimidated by those whose only answer to their valid concerns is to say they are "un-American." These Americans want government to listen, and we ignore them at our own peril.

And that's just the way it is.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of American workers have private health insurance. If you are among those with health insurance, do you really know what you have or what you will have in 5 years? Unfortunately, many people do not understand the limits of their insurance until they get sick.

Without health care reform, insurance companies will continue to deny coverage or increase rates because of preexisting conditions. They will continue to drop people when they get sick or water down coverage when it's needed the most, and they will continue to set caps on the coverage in a given year or over a lifetime.

If you watch your current policy very closely, read the fine print, the American people will see that they are paying more and more for less and less. For Americans with health insurance, these reforms provide stability, affordability, security and peace of mind. Americans should not have to wait for reform.

Congress must get it done this year.

LISTEN TO WHAT REAL AMERI- CANS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT HEALTH REFORM

(Mr. REHBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, after 16 listening sessions over August, I heard from thousands of Montanans about health care reform.

Today, I am here to report that away from the influence of powerful special interests and the spin of political operatives, this debate is very different. That's why it's so important to get out of Washington in order to hear Americans, our bosses, what they think.

We haven't yet seen a final bill in either the House or the Senate. Once we get a final bill, but before we vote on it, Congress should adjourn this body for 30 days, not for more vacation. Far from it, we need those days to return home to listen to what real Americans have to say about the new bill. Then we can vote.

Our children and grandchildren won't remember how fast we reformed health care. They will remember how well we fixed it.

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

(Ms. HIRONO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. Speaker, health insurance is not something we can take for granted. Every day, 14,000 Americans lose their coverage. A recent Treasury Department report noted that approximately half of all Americans under the age of 65 will lose their coverage at some point in the next 10 years.

Thousands are denied coverage because of preexisting conditions, like asthma, pregnancy, arthritis or diabetes. Millions more have no health insurance at all.

In Hawaii, public and private health insurance covers an estimated 92 percent of our population. That means that most of us have health insurance and, because of our Prepaid Health Care Act, our coverage is among the best in the country.

At the same time, Hawaii's economy has been hard hit, and our unemployment rate reached a 31-year high this past May, nearly doubling what it was just last year. Other States are similarly situated. H.R. 3200 will provide affordable health care coverage for those who lose it or never had it.

I urge my colleagues' support for health care reform now.

TAX INCREASE ON MIDDLE-INCOME WORKING AMERICANS

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, as we debate the issue of health care, the administration late last Friday night did something that was 180 degrees from what was promised in last year's campaign. I am referring to a tax increase on middle-income working Americans.

Yes, last Friday night, the administration announced that there will be a 35 percent tariff on inexpensive tires coming in from China. The interesting thing is this was done in response to a petition from the steelworkers union without a single U.S. tire manufacturer signing on in support of this. In fact, they have even gone on so far as to say that if this 35 percent tax is imposed, they will not go into the business of actually manufacturing inexpensive tires.

So what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? It means that we will see not only a 35 percent tax increase on working Americans, but we will not see a single job created here in the United States of America.

We need to realize we also create the potential for great retaliation in a wide range of other areas. This decision is

bad for the American worker and bad for the U.S. economy.

HEALTH CARE PREMIUM INCREASES

(Mr. HALL of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, over the last few weeks, I have heard stories from businesses, nonprofits, individuals, and even health care providers in my district who have received health care premium increases up to 39 percent. These increases are unfair, unsustainable and crippling our economy.

These drastic increases are likely to continue as long as private insurers are allowed to regulate themselves. That's why we must vote soon on a comprehensive plan to improve health care, a plan that will reduce costs for the middle class, end insurance company abuses, and increase stable, quality care and access for all Americans.

We need to get reform done but get it right. We must keep listening and engaging with our constituents to ensure that reform will benefit all Americans. With health care premiums growing three times faster than wages, we can't afford to wait.

AMERICAN JOBS HURT BY PROPOSED HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, the American health care system is in need of reform, but the current proposals are not the solution the American public is looking for. The House health care plan will create a surtax on small business, the lifeblood of our economy, to help pay for the \$1.5 trillion reform.

My constituent, Donald Dickey, is a small business owner and is already being forced to cut his workforce by more than 70 percent because of the current economy. Under the proposed health care reform bill, Donald says he will be forced to close his business because of the combination of the new surtax and requirements for employers to provide health coverage for all workers.

We need to work on commonsense solutions that encourage job growth, expand access to affordable health care, and give Americans the ability to choose a plan that fits their needs. I am willing to work with my colleagues to achieve those goals in a final bill.

STATE OF OUR ECONOMY

(Mr. PASCRELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, on a day after the President addressed this

country on the need for regulatory reform in the financial sector, I stand before you to discuss the state of the economy. Unfortunately, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle fail to comprehend the inextricable connection between the economy and the need for comprehensive health care reform.

We must remember that the extraordinary rise in health care costs and insurance premiums has affected several segments of our economy. Surging health care costs slow the rate of job growth by making it more expensive for companies to add new workers.

As health care costs rise, corporate operating margins are cut, which reduces the capacity of firms to grow by investing in research, plant and equipment. Furthermore, high and escalating out-of-pocket costs are forcing families to delay mortgage payments on their homes.

Since enactment of the Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we have prevented the layoff of tens of thousands of teachers, police officers, and other essential public servants, and we have put people to work renovating schools and hospitals without one vote from the other side.

TORT REFORM WILL REDUCE HEALTH CARE COSTS

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, last week President Obama called for the administration to establish demonstration projects to measure the effectiveness of tort reform. But we don't need to demonstrate that tort reform works; we have already proved that in States where it has been enacted.

In my home State of Texas, for example, health care premiums fell by 30 percent. That means Texans pay less to have better health care and more options. According to a study by the Harvard School of Public Health, 40 percent of medical malpractice suits filed in the U.S. are without merit, 40 percent.

A Department of Health and Human Services study found that unlimited excessive damages add \$70 billion to \$126 billion annually to health care costs. These costs are then passed along to the patient in the price of health care.

Tort reform will reduce health care costs by tens of billions of dollars. We don't need to test tort reform; we need to enact it.

PEOPLE LIKE HEALTH CARE REFORM

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, at my townhall meetings, I was amazed at